

In the Old Days of the Motor Car Trade

Experiences of Veteran in Showing and Selling the Horseless Carriage.

EARLY STEAMERS A PUZZLE TO DEALERS

Crude Forerunners of Modern Motor Car Furnished Many Thrills.

(This is the first of a series of articles by veteran of the automobile trade, covering the early days of the motor car business. The author is Mr. J. H. Schmitt, who has been in the business for over thirty years. He is now in charge of the New York branch of the H. J. Muller & Co. Co., which is one of the largest and best known of the motor car dealers in the city.)

No. 1.—By THEODORE E. SCHULTZ.
It is a long way back—longer than I care to think of—to the days when New Yorkers, then accustomed to seeing thousands of bicycles every day, began to see the two-wheelers give way on the streets to the crude and clumsy "horseless carriage" that has developed so wonderfully into the modern motor car. The firm of Homan & Schultz, consisting of Frank D. Homan and myself, was in the bicycle business at 104th Street and what is now Broadway when, in the fall of 1898, we began to realize that the self-propelled vehicle might become a thing of the future and we decided to get into the business.

The Stanley brothers, who later developed into rather important figures in the industry, were at that time building a steam car. It had no name, but was called a locomobile, whether it was built by Smith, Brown or Jones. We got a car for demonstration and made a selling arrangement, but that year we found no customers.

In 1899 the Stanleys split up their business in such a way that the Stanleys of asphalt, fame, and John B. Walker, of Tarrytown, were building variations of the machine they had developed. Early in that year also came our first customer—an engineer in the Cretan pumping station uptown—who was enthusiastic about the possibilities of self-propelled vehicles. I must confess it hardly lived up to its name. Immobile would have been better.

We didn't seem able to make our car right. It would sputter and backfire and stop on us just at the wrong time, because we couldn't get a continuous draft. This man cared little for looks, and he figured a motor car for a long time, and he got pretty good results. On the street, however, it was a world looking outfit. We sold six other cars of the same kind that year, and began to think we were big business men.

Avoided Big Bills.
In demonstrating the early steamers we simply gave the prospective customer a run of a few blocks, providing the car didn't die on our hands. If he wanted speed we would get up to twenty-five or thirty miles an hour, and if he wanted to get a good look at the machine, we would get him to get his mind off the machine until the steam pressure was raised. It would climb a hill, but we would be the big ones.

When we were required in demonstrating the hill-climbing ability of the steamers, the general scheme was to approach the hill and stop while we explained what a wonderful thing it was for a car to get up a hill. We would get under its own power. That gave us a chance to get up steam, and just before we would begin blowing off—bing! No hill seemed easy. We seemed to get under the car, and the last part of the demonstration was to get the car up the hill.

General cars also began to be heard of in 1900, but compared with the steamers they were experiments and were hardly considered as commercial vehicles. My recollection is that the first gasoline car I ever saw was the Oakman, which was handled by Pete Fisher. It had two high wheels in the rear and two low ones in front. It was a scream. The present car of that name, and then the Haynes-Appleron, the Duryea and the Winton.

About 1900 Europe began to send over some cars, the first of which I remember being a Panhard, owned by Dr. James Lyman. I don't think I ever saw a car that was harder to control. It seemed to have an affinity for hills and telegraph poles, and we seemed to get under the car without getting into trouble. The De Dion, however, and a company was formed to build them down near Coney Island.

A Daring Demonstration.
We took the agency for the De Dion, our first car, and sold quite a few. There were two conditions, and we had two speeds, low and high, of course. If a customer wanted a reverse gear he had to pay extra for it. The most daring form of demonstration was to offer to take a customer to the top of the Empire State Building. I never felt sure the car would even get there, much less back, and when the round trip was made successfully it was the signal for a week of idleness. The car was so good that it was never used again. I never felt sure the car would even get there, much less back, and when the round trip was made successfully it was the signal for a week of idleness.

"I am inclined to think that our firm was the first to actually engage in the selling of automobiles in New York, but I don't know. The first car I sold was a Panhard. That was in 1900 and it was at 104th Street and the Boulevard. Up to that time owners of horseless carriages had stored them where they could find space, and sometimes it was difficult to get a place. "The brakes on the early cars worked only when the wheels were going forward. Running backward they were unresponsive, and we used a spring which would engage the wheels when the car was going backward. One day I was on a hill, because the spring had been dropped just at the right moment when the car stopped and before it had begun to start backward. If it had started the spring would sink into the ground, the rear of the car would lift about three feet in the air, and then, I remember, I said: "Well, I guess I'm still one of the young 'uns."

The oldtime Automobile Row, in Thirty-eighth Street, started in 1901, when Smith & Mabley moved into the new Auto Exchange, between Broadway and Avenue A, and Banker Brothers built the Auto Palace. Every one opened salerooms around there then, and every week saw a new make of car on sale. We thought some of them were the last word, mechanically, and in appearance. Some of them made so much noise that they could be heard a mile away.

In 1901, or early in 1902, Ray Owen came to New York with the rumored dash of the Auto Palace. He came to us, as representative dealers, and he asked him to take us to Grant's farm and back. He did it in a way that made us appear he could keep on indefinitely, and we jumped at the chance to secure the agency. We sold ten of them in a few days at \$650 apiece.

"The Northern, which was a remarkably quiet car, came along in 1902. It was built in the Detroit Stove Works by John Maxwell, who had started as a mechanic with the Haynes-Appleron Company. I think we sold seventy-five of them.

Truck Exports Break Records

Due to the demand created by the war the value of motor trucks exported last year represented an increase of 432 per cent over 1913. The value of all motor vehicles exported in 1914 was more than 5 per cent greater than in the previous twelve months. In 1914 the United States sent abroad 3,439 commercial vehicles, valued at \$8,983,753, as compared with 1,009, worth \$1,686,807 in 1913. The total of motor vehicles exported last year was 23,745, worth \$28,507,464, as against 26,880, worth \$27,030,431 in 1913. Imports again showed a big decrease, 296 vehicles, valued at \$493,305, being received, as against 492, worth \$1,154,873, in 1913.

elled up to that time by John Wannamaker, for whom Gaston Packard, of New York, came to us after the North-east. Gaston told me it was a great car, and it wasn't bad for that stage of the industry. I know it sold well, and kept us going until the Marmon made its debut in New York in 1906.

"The early dealers had practically the choice of the cars they cared to handle, and a little foresight would have been of value. We made many errors of judgment, and as I look back, I think the worst made by Homan & Schultz was the turn down of the Packard car when it first came to New York. "The early Packards and the early Wintons were much alike, and we were assured that the Packard people had plenty of money and were determined to make their leading car of America. We couldn't see it then, but several times I thought of the fact that we had taken the Packard and held it we might have made some money. Possibly there are others along the Row who will agree with me."

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GRAVITY TEST IS BEST

Battery Expert Shows Difference in Methods.

Voltage tests are not the best way to tell the condition of a storage battery, according to D. P. Orcutt, of the Electric Storage Battery Company, who lectured last Thursday at the opening of a new term in the Western Union Motor School. The speaker said that the condition of a battery as revealed by the two methods. In the voltage test the battery seemed to be almost normal, falling off a little when the battery was put under load, but when the gravity test was made, the battery gave out abruptly.

"The gravity test of the same battery, taken at the same time as the voltage reading, showed the battery, instead of holding almost normal and then giving out, was losing in efficiency regularly. With the use of a hydrometer, Mr. Orcutt said, the gravity test was simply and quickly made. "Most of the trouble reported to us," said the speaker, "is caused by adding acid to the batteries. Add nothing but pure, but not your battery. Many people think that the acid evaporates and needs renewing. As a matter of fact, the storage cells are sealed and the little that is lost is not worth considering."

NUMBERS IN REAR ARE HARD TO READ

Secretary of State Urges Motorists to Correct Common Fault.

Francis M. Hugo, Secretary of State, in a recent interview said that a few years ago a serious and common form of trouble still prevalent. Mr. Hugo says, "is the difficulty experienced in identifying motor vehicles at night. Attention already has been directed to this defect by the State Department and local police authorities. "Although the provisions of the motor vehicle law, if properly carried out, insure that all motor cars shall have a tail light illuminating the number plate so as to render the numbers visible at least fifty feet away, there is a tendency to pay little attention to this regulation. "For some time past, however, experiments have been conducted with a view of urging the adoption of a new form of transparent number tag, which is a tail light illuminating the number plate so as to render the numbers visible at least fifty feet away, there is a tendency to pay little attention to this regulation."

"No doubt the argument may be made by motorists that the safety of the road for all users would be greatly increased if horse-drawn vehicles were compelled to obey the law, enacted last year, requiring every vehicle to carry a rear lamp of some kind. Although the number of fatal accidents caused by motor cars is increasing, the number of accidents caused by horse-drawn vehicles is also increasing. It is a fact that a special purpose of \$100 has been set aside for the most unlucky contestants. "The oldtime Automobile Row, in Thirty-eighth Street, started in 1901, when Smith & Mabley moved into the new Auto Exchange, between Broadway and Avenue A, and Banker Brothers built the Auto Palace. Every one opened salerooms around there then, and every week saw a new make of car on sale. We thought some of them were the last word, mechanically, and in appearance. Some of them made so much noise that they could be heard a mile away."

Be Unlucky and Win.

March 1 is the closing day for entries in the Venice 300-mile international motorcycle race, which is to be held on March 28 over the three-mile course at Venice-by-the-Sea, in California. The course is being carefully gone over for the long grid, and the contest promises to be as big a drawing card as the annual Dodge City and Savannah 300-mile events. A novel feature of the California race is the fact that a special purse of \$100 has been set aside for the most unlucky contestants. "The oldtime Automobile Row, in Thirty-eighth Street, started in 1901, when Smith & Mabley moved into the new Auto Exchange, between Broadway and Avenue A, and Banker Brothers built the Auto Palace. Every one opened salerooms around there then, and every week saw a new make of car on sale. We thought some of them were the last word, mechanically, and in appearance. Some of them made so much noise that they could be heard a mile away."

Veteran Rides Motorcycle.

Although eighty-three years old, Alfred S. Hensley, of Stanhope, N. J., refuses to take a day, especially when it comes to riding a motorcycle. Recently Hensley remarked that he used to be quite a motorcyclist. His cronies laughed at the remark, and wagged their heads at the old man's declaration that he could keep on indefinitely, and we jumped at the chance to secure the agency. We sold ten of them in a few days at \$650 apiece. "The Northern, which was a remarkably quiet car, came along in 1902. It was built in the Detroit Stove Works by John Maxwell, who had started as a mechanic with the Haynes-Appleron Company. I think we sold seventy-five of them."

VANDERBILT CUP RACE TO-MORROW

Circuit Is Inside of the Exposition Grounds in San Francisco.

THIRTY-THREE CARS FOR GREAT CONTEST

Grand Prize, with Thirty-four Entrants, To Be Decided Next Saturday.

This will be one of the great weeks of the year for the automobile speed enthusiasts. To-morrow will bring the running of the classic Vanderbilt Cup race over the exposition course in San Francisco, and next Saturday the Grand Prize will be run over the same circuit. As the former has drawn thirty-three entries and the Gold Cup one more than that number, the 1915 renewals constitute new records.

Both trophies have been at stake on a salesmen's come to us after the North-east. Gaston told me it was a great car, and it wasn't bad for that stage of the industry. I know it sold well, and kept us going until the Marmon made its debut in New York in 1906.

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BOILLOT DESCRIBES PERILS AT FRONT

Champion Auto Pilot Says Highways Have Become Rivers of Mud.

STEADILY ON DUTY FOR SEVEN MONTHS

Has Asked for Leave of Absence to Visit America for Speedway Races.

Indianspolis, Feb. 20.—Georges Boillot, Europe's road racing champion and a participant in the last 500-mile race at Indianapolis, who is now driving a car for General Joffre, gives an inside view of war conditions in a letter to officials of the speedway here. Inasmuch as Boillot has been constantly at the front since the war began, his words carry more than ordinary interest. He writes in part as follows:

"Since July 27 I have been constantly on the road, flying from one point to another, with very little time to spare. Time is more than money over here. "The driving of cars inside the fighting area has become a tremendous task, as well as a dangerous one. With cannons and all the artillery stuff, the lorries carrying food and buses carrying troops, the roads have been unable to stand the strain. So with the rain we have had lately it looks as if we were touring in the bed of a river instead of on a road."

"You can imagine what a job it is when you have to be at such a place at an appointed time, and you are held up on the road by your car. In the mud as far as your back axle. We couldn't half get along but for horses and chains to pull us out."

Boillot gives some personal news of his former racing team, master of the local and states incidentally that he has been trying to get away for the next 500-mile race, but to date has been unsuccessful. He says:

"Goux is still at Belgium, in very good health. I have seen him twice in six months. As you know already, Rigal and my brother are with me at the General Headquarters. You can imagine with what joy we suffer a week or two of absence on a trip amid the shells on the front. One never knows if I will come back alive or not. "I should like very much to go to America to race this year. I am doing all I can to obtain two or three months' leave from the army. But it is very difficult, if not impossible, to get it, for you must not forget that any Frenchman who leaves his post is liable to be shot. I realize that this is rather a hazardous time of war."

"If I succeed in my request, Goux and I will go with the last Lyons Grand Prix racing car, and I will carry you with me. I will carry you with me at the General Headquarters. You can imagine with what joy we suffer a week or two of absence on a trip amid the shells on the front. One never knows if I will come back alive or not. "I should like very much to go to America to race this year. I am doing all I can to obtain two or three months' leave from the army. But it is very difficult, if not impossible, to get it, for you must not forget that any Frenchman who leaves his post is liable to be shot. I realize that this is rather a hazardous time of war."

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GIRL PLANS AUTO JOURNEY TO COAST

Miss Genevieve Marsh, with Woman Helper, to Leave on March 2.

The first transcontinental trip of 1915 to be made by a woman at the wheel of an automobile accompanied only by a woman helper, has been planned by Miss Genevieve Marsh, formerly of Brooklyn and now a resident of San Francisco. Miss Marsh, who is visiting in the East, will drive a Jolly touring car, and hopes to carry letters of felicitation from the Mayor of San Francisco, Governor Johnson of California and other officials.

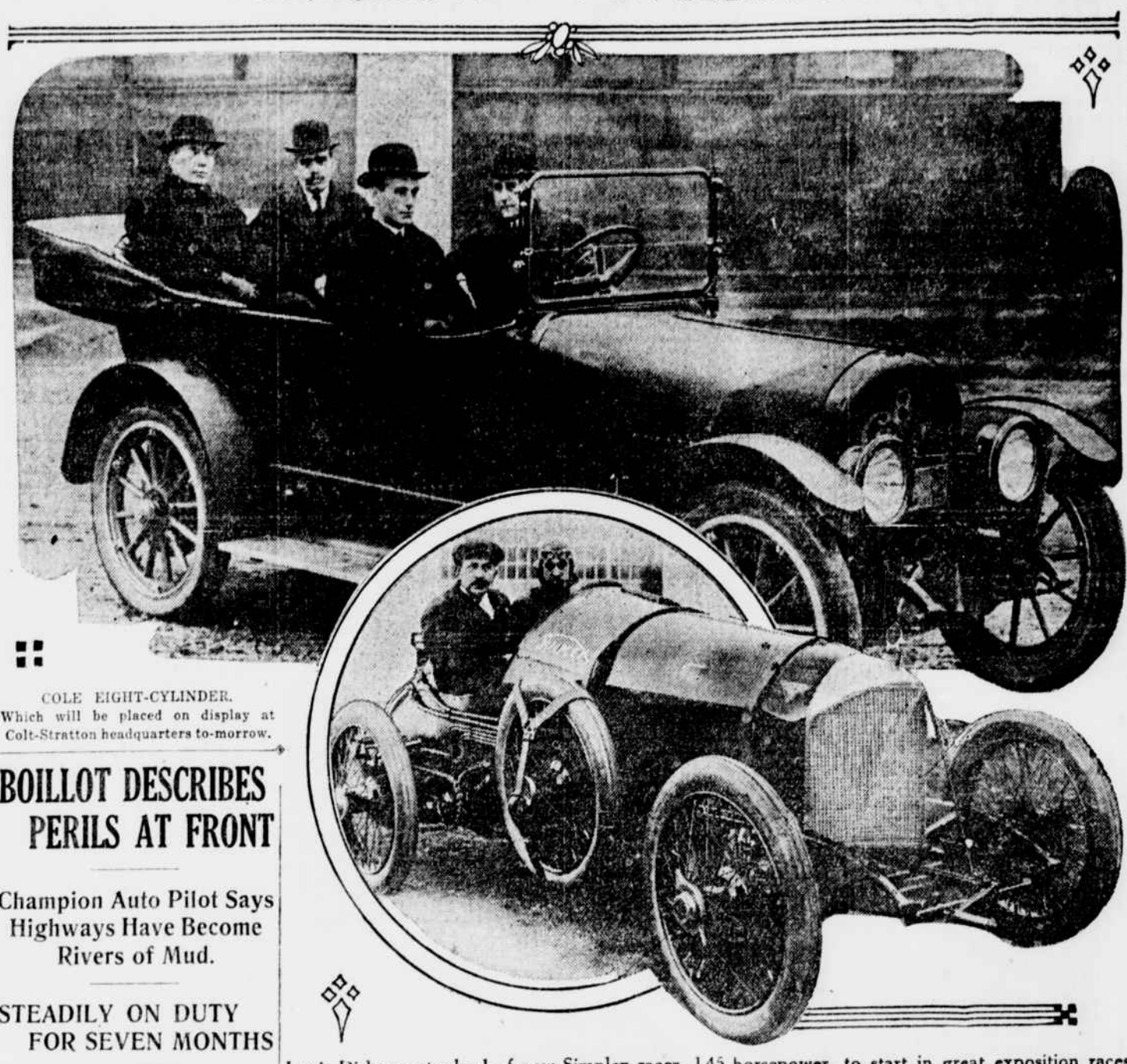
MASTERS TO MEET IN CHESS TOURNEY

Lasker, Capablanca, Marshall and Others Will Clash for Prizes in This City.

At a meeting in the Manhattan Chess Club last Thursday evening it was decided to hold a masters' tourney in this city in April, with eight competitors, each man to play two games with every other player, so that four rounds will be necessary to conclude the contest. In addition to Capablanca, Marshall, Lasker, Chajnes and Kupchik, three chess masters from the Brooklyn Chess Club, there will be four substantial prizes given, and also a fee for every won or drawn game to the non-prize winners.

A board of patrons will provide the "side show" of the tourney. While the number of rounds will be played at the Manhattan Chess club, it is intended to offer rounds at the Brooklyn Chess Club and other metropolitan organizations, while the management intends to play two rounds in public, so as to give all chess players not belonging to clubs a chance of seeing part of the tourney. "I realize that this is rather a hazardous time of war."

NEW TOURING MODEL AND A NEW RACING CAR TO BE INTRODUCED TO THE PUBLIC DURING THE WEEK



Louis Disbrow at wheel of new Simplex racer, 145-horsepower, to start in great exposition races to-morrow and Saturday.

Happenings of Interest Along Automobile Row

Safety First Society to Take Hand in Speed Regulation.

POERTNER AT HEAD OF CONTEST BODY

New Rochelle Will Be Healthiest City in State if Louis Smith Has His Way.

Because of the number of public and private schools and the enormous foot traffic in this city local motorists are likely to display considerable interest in the annual Safety First Convention to be held on Thursday in the Craftsman Building. The conference will come from many cities and their efforts will be to standardize traffic regulations throughout the country.

Among the recommendations is one which, if adopted by the local authorities, will have quite an effect on local motoring. It will provide for a speed limit to not exceed four miles an hour when turning corners and while traversing blocks on which are situated schools of any kind during the time that children are on the street.

Another point to be taken up, and one to which motor car drivers will not object, is the regulation of foot traffic. It will be urged that the city should close its streets at the regular intersections, instead of darting across where fancy dictates between blocks.

There's a new member of the Board of Health in New Rochelle, and it's Louis Smith, of the Class Journal Company, whose entire time heretofore has been spent on Automobile Row. The new member of the board, which is something of a disappointment to Louis, anyway, it will be an efficiency administration, "for the people and by the people." It will know what the people want, and it will know what the people need, and it will know what the people can do.

Life is just one automobile show after another with Charlie Ries, the Humptreys, and the other dealers who are cropping up all over his territory, and every dealer insists that Mr. Ries need the benefit of his presence. Albany, Hartford and Poughkeepsie were a few of his recent stopping places, and in each he found business brisk.

William C. Poertner has been re-elected president of the Motor Dealers' Association, with other officers as follows: First vice-president, E. J. Lascaris; second vice-president, E. C. J. MacShane; treasurer, James Nichols; secretary, E. P. Kowbe. These officers are also on the board of directors, with C. H. Larson, I. M. Uppercu, W. J. Morgan, Horace D. Lissner, A. B. Corbitt, S. S. Toback, George H. Robertson, James Carples, Charles Wells and David H. Beacroft. Considerable activity is planned for the coming season, the schedule including race meets, probably at Brighton Beach, and several others.

A. G. Southworth, manager of the Buick Motor Company, is spending his vacation at Palm Beach. Most of his time is devoted to chasing a golf ball. Orlando F. Webber, well known in local automobile circles through his connection with Palmer & Singer and other concerns, is at present in Berlin or on his way home from that city. This is his second trip to Europe with cars, and he expects to return the same way.

As president of the Light Car Association of America, "Doc" Percival has broken loose again. The latest idea of the noted author is to conduct a rally, bility run from New York to Boston, starting at midnight on March 7 and finishing some time the next day at the Boston automobile show. He says he has entries of three Saxons, Coey Bear, a Zip, a Twombly and a Trumbull and that it is probable that a dozen cars will make the run.

R. H. Johnston, of the White Company, has been re-elected president of the Automobile Dealers' Association. C. H. Larson continues as vice-president, and Charles M. Brown, of the Winton Company, succeeds Frank Ewald as secretary and treasurer. The association is now working on its protest against the rule of the Fire Department requiring that no garage shall be conducted within fifty feet of a school, hospital, theatre or other place of meeting. It is claimed that this rule imposes an unnecessary hardship.

"Service is a gratuity. It is the work we do for nothing in order to make good all the promises that go with the sale of the car. It may be only instructions to a driver or owner in how to care for the car. Repairs, where the fault lies directly with the owner, are shop work, and are naturally charged for."

The Singer Motor Company has leased a showroom at the northeast corner of Broadway and N. Sixty-first Street, which will be opened to-morrow.

King W. Lardner, of Chicago, who knows him, Al, bought a Chandler "six" at the recent Coliseum show. He risked expulsion from the Writers' Association by paying for it on the spot.

News of the Auto Trade in and Out of New York

War Orders Will Keep Locomobile Plant Busy for a Long Time to Come.

With orders that extend for the duration of the war, the Locomobile company of America is its factory at Bridgeport running to the limit of production. In addition to a large initial order, said to be two hundred cars, the concern has contracted to supply thirty cars a month as long as the war lasts.

The tests of the Locomobile trucks are running to the limit of production. In addition to a large initial order, said to be two hundred cars, the concern has contracted to supply thirty cars a month as long as the war lasts. The tests of the Locomobile trucks are running to the limit of production.

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USED CARS FOR 'BUSES

Problem for Dealers.

In the jitney bus, W. C. Hood, of the Briggs-Detroit Company, of Detroit, sees a factor that will do much toward solving the car problem, viewed by both dealers and manufacturers with growing concern during the last few years.

"The possibilities of the jitney bus make a strong appeal to the men who would not think of owning an automobile unless it could be made to earn money," says Mr. Hood. "In every city and town in the country there are men who have saved up a few hundred dollars with the view of ultimately putting the money into some kind of business, and these men will be quick to realize the opportunities offered by the jitney bus."

Leaving out specially built cars having a carrying capacity of ten or more persons, as well as new touring cars, both of which could not be considered by these men on account of their original cost, the logical car for the shop work, and are naturally charged for."

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Ten Meets for Columbia Lawn Tennis Team

Ten matches are on the schedule of the Columbia lawn tennis team for its spring season, according to the announcement yesterday by the manager, M. A. Bridges. Aside from the two contests with Lafayette and Lehigh, respectively, at the Lehigh Valley Club, the Columbia team will play ten matches with the College of the City of New York.

The schedule is as follows:
April 16, College of the City of New York at South Field, April 17, College of the City of New York at South Field, April 18, College of the City of New York at South Field, April 19, College of the City of New York at South Field, April 20, College of the City of New York at South Field, April 21, College of the City of New York at South Field, April 22, College of the City of New York at South Field, April 23, College of the City of New York at South Field, April 24, College of the City of New York at South Field, April 25, College of the City of New York at South Field, April 26, College of the City of New York at South Field, April 27, College of the City of New York at South Field, April 28, College of the City of New York at South Field, April 29, College of the City of New York at South Field, April 30, College of the City of New York at South Field, May 1, College of the City of New York at South Field, May 2, College of the City of New York at South Field, May 3, College of the City of New York at South Field, May 4, College of the City of New York at South Field, May 5, College of the City of New York at South Field, May 6, College of the City of New York at South Field, May 7, College of the City of New York at South Field, May 8, College of the City of New York at South Field, May 9, College of the City of New York at South Field, May 10, College of the City of New York at South Field, May 11, College of the City of New York at South Field, May 12, College of the City of New York at South Field, May 13, College of the City of New York at South Field, May 14, College of the City of New York at South Field, May 15, College of the City of New